



City of Mesa Youth Flag Football League Rules

The City of Mesa Youth Flag Football league is designed to be a fun and affordable flag football option for the children of Mesa. One of the MPRD staff members spoke with various High School Coaches in the past and found that they used this type of program in the summer with their varsity players. There are several aspects that are especially attractive to our staff and they are as follows:

- Everyone plays
- This type of program eliminates contact
- Fewer people are on the field at one time
- No blocking or screening is allowed
- No one is designated as a full-time blocker

Age Divisions are as follows...

- 6 – 7 years old co-ed
- 8 – 9 years old co-ed
- 10 – 11 years old co-ed
- 12 – 14 years old female
- 12 – 14 years old male

Age shall be determined by the following, when you register for a program within the City of Mesa you are required to input your date of birth in our RecTrac system. The cut-off date for your division will be 9/29/09 which is the last day of registration. Your division eligibility is based solely on your date of birth; there will be no other factors in this determination (i.e. grade level, physical size, siblings). The City of Mesa reserves the right to ask for proper paperwork (birth records) in case there is suspicion of a possible age discrepancy.

Youth Flag Football

RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A team consists of about 10 players. Teams will be determined by the City of Mesa staff according to proximity of home address regardless of gender.
***Coaches can elect to bring an entire team into the league if approved by league administrator.
- A coin toss determines first possession. The loser of the coin toss will choose the end zone it would prefer to defend.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield.
- Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its own five-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own five-yard line. All possession changes, except interceptions will start at team's own five yard line.
- There will be no declaration of punt. If a team does not get the first down in their four plays, then the ball will be turned over to the opposing team on their own five-yard line.
- If a player's flag should fall off without being pulled by an opponent, the play shall become dead, and the ball shall be spotted at the point where the runner was when they first gained possession of the ball.
- If a player is found to have tied on a flag so as to make it more difficult or impossible to remove, the play shall become dead at the point the violation is recognized, and a ten-yard penalty against the offending team shall be enforced.
- All shirttails shall be tucked in at all times; they are not to hang over players' flag belts.

PRE-GAME PROCEDURES:

- All players should arrive at least 15 minutes before game time.

ATTIRE:

- Rubber soled shoes or molded cleats only. No screw-in or metal cleats allowed. Inspections can and will be made.

- Each team must wear the uniforms provided by the City of Mesa. Any player not wearing the proper uniform will NOT be allowed to play in games.
- No watches, earrings or other jewelry may be worn by players (unless it is for medical reasons i.e. a medical alert bracelet.)
- All players are **encouraged** to wear a mouthpiece.
- Pants or shorts with belts loops or pockets must be taped. (this is to avoid injuries)
- Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.

EQUIPMENT:

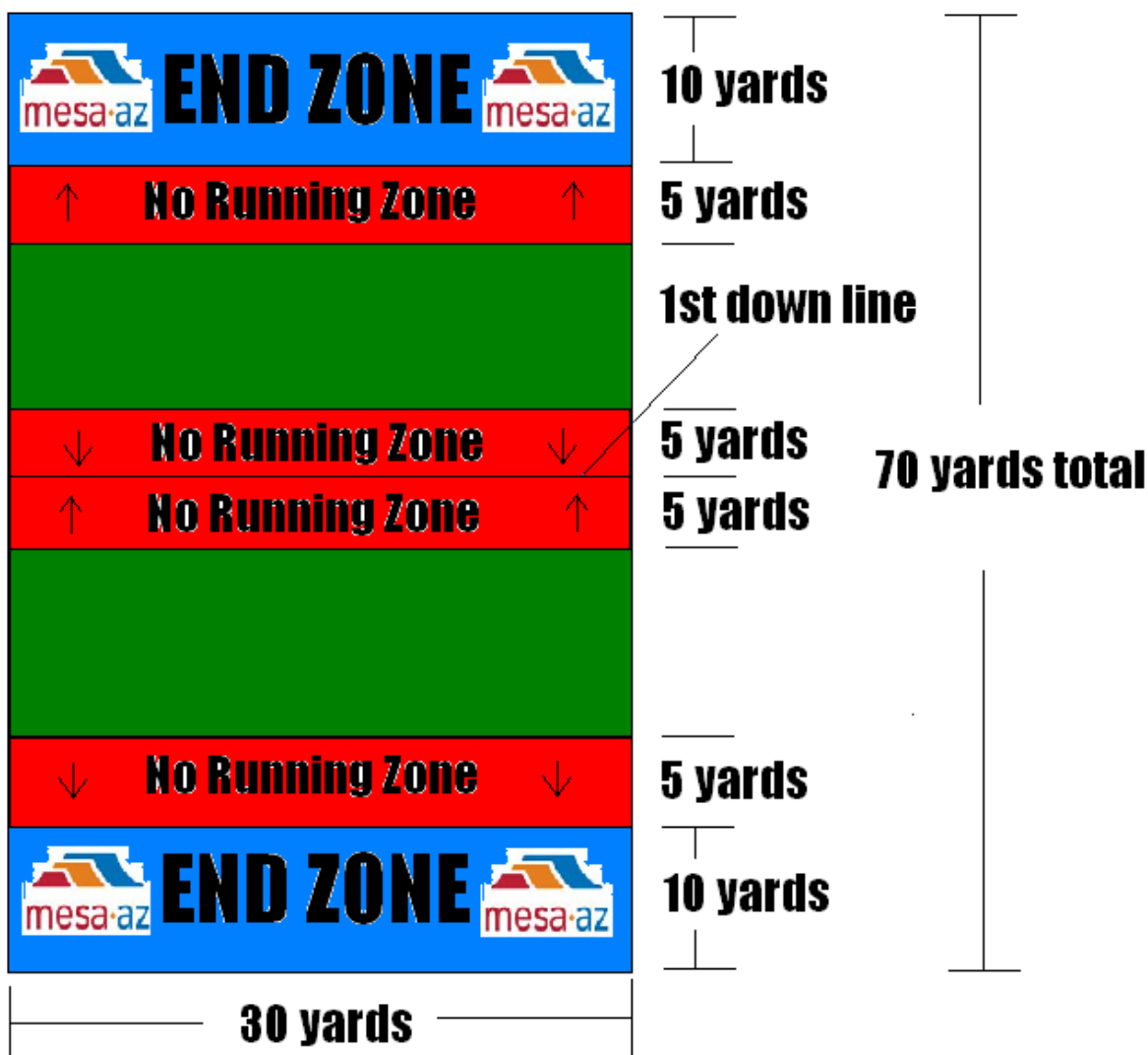
- A regulation leather football will be used during games; size may vary by age group between Junior, Intermediate and Collegiate.
- The City of Mesa will provide all game balls and flag belts.
- The City of Mesa will provide jerseys to participants; their jerseys must be worn during league play.

TIMING/OVERTIME:

- Games are played to 40 minutes. Two twenty minute running halves. Officials will keep track of the official game time.
- Home teams are to provide their own scorekeeper. (Officials will keep official score but we will have flip charts available at fields.)
- Game Time is forfeit time, the first game of the day (8:00am) will receive a five minute grace period (8:05am.)
- A team must have at least 4 players present to start a game, once 4 players are there and the official's clock says game time, the game may begin.
- If 4 players are not there by game time, the game will be a forfeit.
- Halftime is to be 3 minutes in length.
- Each time the ball is spotted a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- Each team has one (2 total) 60-second time outs per half. Teams will be granted one additional time out in overtime. (Time-outs will not carry over to halves or overtime)

- Officials can stop the clock on their own discretion (injury or to address an issue).
- Overtime will be determined as follows...
If a game is tied at the end of regulation, each team will get 1 possession on their opponents' 10 yard line. They will have 4 downs to score a touchdown; if they score they will have the choice of a 1 point (from the 5 yard line) or 2 point (from the 10 yard line) conversion. After the touchdown or failed scoring attempt, the other team will get the same opportunity to score. This sequence will continue until one team outscores the other.

THE FIELD:



Notes on the field of play:

*** The field will be 30 yards wide by 70 yards long total. There will be two 10-yard end zones on each end. The 25 yard line will be at midfield and that is the first down yard line for each team. It will be marked on the field.

*** No Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. They are 5-yard imaginary zones before the 1st down line and the end zone (these zones will be marked with cones). While in the no run zones, teams may not run the ball in any fashion. All plays, including those that begin with a handoff, must be pass plays.

*** Each offensive squad approaches only **TWO** No Run Zones in each drive (before midfield and before the end zone.)

*** Stepping on the boundary lines is considered out of bounds.

SCORING:

- Touchdown = 6 points

Choice of...

- PAT = 1 point (played from the 5-yard line)

Or

- PAT = 2 points (played from the 10-yard line)

*** A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether they wish to attempt a 1-pt conversion (from the 5 yard line) or a 2-pt conversion (from the 10 yard line). This declaration will be decided by the team's head coach. Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point(s), requires a charged time out. The PAT decision cannot be changed after a penalty.

- Safety = 2 points

*** A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls off, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee, forearm or elbow (this does not include the hand). A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.

RUNNING:

- The quarterback is the person who receives the snap of the football. The quarterback cannot directly run the ball. They may run the ball after receiving a pass after they have handed the ball off.
- Only one run allowed per four downs. (*Exception: 6-7 year old league will be allowed 2 running plays per four downs.*)

- “No running zones” – located five yards from each end zone and five yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations.
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage, but play will still count as running play.
- Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush. There is absolutely **no rushing** on any other plays.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet.
- No hurdling or diving allowed when in possession of the ball to gain yardage. Hurdling, jumping and diving are considered flag guarding.
***Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced(as interpreted by the official.)
- The ball is spotted where the ball is when the ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
***For 1st downs and touchdowns, one point or edge of the football must cross the line.
- Laterals and pitches are allowed. If they are beyond the line of scrimmage and considered forward progress then they will be dead balls at the spot of the lateral/pitch. If they are behind the line of scrimmage, they will be considered running plays.
- Overhand passes may not be received behind the line of scrimmage; they may only be received parallel or beyond the line of scrimmage.

RECEIVING:

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- A player must wear a flag belt in order to be considered eligible to receive a pass.
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time, all motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage (no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage).
- Players must have two feet inbound when making a catch.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- **No blocking at any time.**
- **Laterals beyond the line of scrimmage are allowed. (The hook & ladder play is legal).** For an illegal forward lateral, the ball will be placed down at the spot where the illegal lateral was made.

- Overhand passes may not be received behind the line of scrimmage; they may only be received parallel or beyond the line of scrimmage.

PASSING:

- All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown overhand and received parallel or beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Any overhand passes that are received behind the line of scrimmage will be considered an illegal forward pass.
- Shovel Passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- QB has a six-second “pass-clock”. If a pass is not thrown within the six seconds, play is dead, and will be considered as an incomplete pass. The ball will be returned to the original line of scrimmage (this includes plays in the end zone). Once the ball is handed off, the six-second rule is no longer in effect.
- Interceptions change possession of the ball and they can be returned. The intercepting player will not be considered down until their flag is pulled. (Interceptions in the end zone that are downed will be brought out to the 5 yard line.)

LIVE BALL / DEAD BALL:

- A team must have 4 players on the field to start a play, but no more than 5 players.
- Ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play (if the ball hits the ground on a snap, it is considered down).
- The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- Any official may whistle the play dead.
- Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - a.) The ball hits the ground.
 - b.) The Ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
 - c.) The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d.) A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - e.) The ball carrier’s knee or elbow hits the ground.
 - f.) The ball carrier’s flag falls off.
 - g.) The receiver catches the ball while missing a flag.
 - h.) The 6 second pass clock expires.
 - i.) An inadvertent whistle is performed (at the spot where the ball was whistled dead.)
- In case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - a.) Take the ball where the whistle blown made the play dead.

b.) Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

- The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regards to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back beyond the line.
- A player who gains possession of the ball while in the air is considered in bounds as long as two feet come down in the field of play.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the runner’s (the last person in possession of the ball) feet are when the ball hits the ground.

FLAG PULLING / DOWN BY CONTACT:

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through ball carrier when pulling flags.
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier’s possession at any time.
- If a player’s flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of players who are not in possession of the ball.
- Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender’s access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping of head, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering flags with the football or jersey.
- A player will be considered down if their knee, elbow or forearm hits the ground. This rule does not include a player’s hand.

Formations:

- An offensive team must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the Center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The Quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - (a.) One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard beyond and parallel to the line of scrimmage
 - (b.) No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.

- Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the one player in motion.
- Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
- The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING:

- Officials or Site Supervisors may eject a player, coach or fan for unsportsmanlike conduct at any time without prior warning.
- If the site supervisor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
- Ball carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- The defense or offense may not mimic the opposing teams' signals, by trying to confuse the opposing players while they are calling out plays.
- Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language (trash talking is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators). If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
- If you physically contact an official you will be immediately ejected and possibly suspended from league play.
- A coach or parent is prohibited from coming onto the playing field at any time during a game without the permission of an official.

PENALTIES:

- **The Referees will call all penalties.**
- The Referees will determine incidental contact which may result from normal run of play.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted (spot fouls).
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

- Two forms of penalties are assessed: live ball and dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before the play is considered completed.
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal line if the distance to the goal line is less than the penalty yardage.

5 Yard Penalties:

- Illegal equipment
- Offside
- Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.)
- Illegal forward pass (pass received behind line of scrimmage or throwing a pass beyond the line of scrimmage)
- Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)
- Screening, blocking or running with the ball carrier
- Delay of game
- Defense illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.)
- Defense illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball)
- Defense illegal rushing (any rushing the Quarterback at all)

10 Yard Penalties:

- Roughing the passer
- Taunting
- Charging or Stiff-arming (ball carrier going directly into the defensive player who has established position on the field, this includes lowering the head, making contact with a shoulder, arm or chest.)
- Unsportsmanlike conduct: After scoring and touchdown is good, offense receives 10 yard penalty from the yard line of PAT attempt after touchdown.

Spot Fouls:

- Flag Guarding = 10 yards & loss of down
- Charging / Stiff-arming = 10 yards & loss of down

- Defensive Pass Interference = 10 yards & first down
- Stripping = 10 yards & first down
- Unnecessary Roughness = 10 yards & loss of down
- Screening, Blocking or Running with the ball carrier = 5 yards & loss of down

Defensive:

- Offside = 5 yards and repeat down.
- Interference = Spot foul, 10 yards and automatic 1st down.
- Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.) = 5 yards and automatic first down.
- Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball) = 5 yards and automatic first down.
- Illegal rushing = 5 yards and automatic first down.
- Roughing the Passer = 10 yards and automatic first down.
- Taunting = 10 yards and automatic first down.
- Unnecessary Roughness = Spot foul, 10 yards and automatic first down
- Stripping = Spot foul, 10 yards and automatic first down

Offensive:

- Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.) – five yards and repeat down.
- Illegal forward pass (overhand pass received behind the line of scrimmage) – five yards and repeat down.
- Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) – five yards and repeat down.
- Flag guarding – spot foul, 10 yards and loss of down
- Screening, Blocking or Running with the ball carrier – spot foul, 5 yards and loss of down.
- Delay of game – clock stops, five yards, and repeat down.

Official's Elasticity Clause:

- The flag football rules in this manual do not cover all rules situations that may occur in a flag football game. Those rules and situations not covered in this manual will be governed by commonly accepted flag football rules as understood by the officials.

LEAGUE STANDINGS:

- Standings are based on Win-Loss records.
- Tied positions, among two or more teams, are broken by Win-Loss record in games against each other. A team with a forfeit will take the lower position among tied teams.
- If teams are still tied, the tie is broken by point differential (points scored minus points allowed) among the tied teams.
- Standings are available with the field supervisor or by calling the office at (480)644-3040.

PLAYOFFS (SEASON END TOURNAMENT):

- Teams will be seeded depending on overall season record.
- The tournament will be single elimination.

AWARDS:

- The Tournament Champion will receive t-shirts for players and 2 coaches.
- The League Champion (best regular season record) will receive a plaque.

INCLEMENT WEATHER / RAIN LINE:

- In case of inclement weather, please contact the league administrator at the following numbers...

Rocky Brown office (480)644-3040 or cell (480)694-6918

INSURANCE:

The City of Mesa does **NOT** provide insurance for players. You play at your own risk and carry your own insurance.

Game Site Location:

Mountain View Park

854 N. Lindsey

Mesa, Az. 85213

The park is located east of Lindsey Road and North of Adobe Road

League Administrators:

Rocky Brown, Recreation Specialist (480) 644-3040

Beverlee Nielsen, Recreation Coordinator (480) 644-4345

Mark Grant, Recreation Coordinator (480) 644-3651

City of Mesa Parks Recreation & Commercial Facilities
200 South Center Street Building #1
Mesa, Az. 85210